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5 Attorneys for Plaintiff

6 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

7 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

9 THERESA BROOKE, a married woman  
10 dealing with her sole and separate claim,

11 Plaintiff,

12 vs.

13 RUFFIN HOTELS LP, a California limited  
14 partnership,

15 Defendant.

Case No:

**VERIFIED COMPLAINT**

**(JURY TRIAL DEMANDED)**

16 Plaintiff Theresa Marie Brooke alleges:

17 **PARTIES**

18 1. Plaintiff Theresa Brooke is a married woman. Plaintiff is legally disabled,  
19 and is therefore a member of a protected class under the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2),  
20 the regulations implementing the ADA set forth at 28 CFR §§ 36.101 et seq., the  
21 California Unruh Civil Rights Act. Plaintiff ambulates with the aid of a wheelchair due  
22 to the loss of a leg.

23 2. Defendant, Ruffin Hotels LP, owns and/or operates and does business as  
24 the hotel Long Beach Marriott located at 4700 Airport Plaza Drive, Long Beach,  
25 California 90815. Defendant's hotel is a public accommodation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §  
26 12181(7)(A), which offers public lodging services. On information and belief,  
27 Defendant's hotel was built or renovated after March 15, 2012.  
28

## **JURISDICTION**

2           3.        Jurisdiction in this Court is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 42  
3 U.S.C. § 12188.

4       4. Plaintiff's claims asserted herein arose in this judicial district and  
5 Defendant does substantial business in this judicial district.

6       5.     Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1331(b) and (c)  
7     in that this is the judicial district in which a substantial part of the acts and omissions  
8     giving rise to the claims occurred.

9       6. Pursuant to *Arroyo v. Rosas*, supplemental jurisdiction is appropriate over  
10 Plaintiff's Unruh claim. On a case-specific analysis, there are no compelling reasons to  
11 decline jurisdiction.

## **ALLEGATIONS**

13       7. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant's hotel does not have a compliant access  
14 aisle at the passenger loading zone adjacent to the hotel lobby in violation of Section  
15 503 of the 2010 Standards. An access aisle has specific requirements: It must be 60  
16 inches wide and at least 20 feet long, it must have an accessible route adjoining it, and it  
17 cannot be within a vehicular way. Section 503.3.

18       8. Plaintiff formerly worked in the hospitality industry and her husband  
19 works in the travel industry. She and her husband are avid travelers to California for  
20 purposes of leisure travel and to “test” whether various hotels comply with disability  
21 access laws. Testing is encouraged by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

22       9. Plaintiff and her husband traveled to the Los Angeles area in early July of  
23 this year. She and her husband anticipate returning several times in the next few months  
24 for required hearings, depositions and further testing. For example, she has flight plans  
25 for a return in August and intends on making a reservation to lodge at this hotel in the  
26 event Defendant actually fixes the barrier at issue.

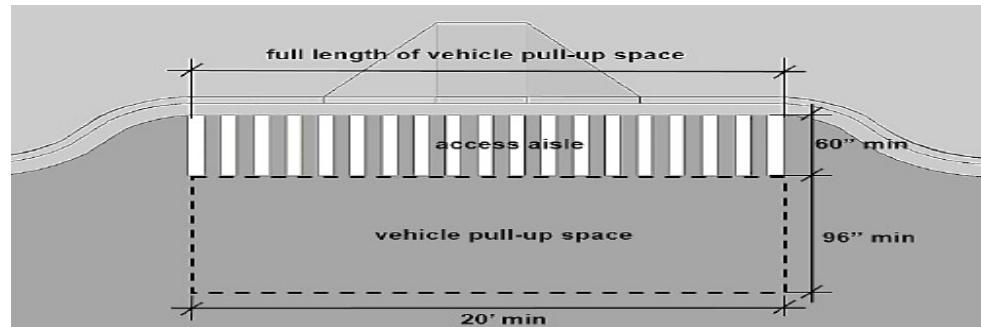
27       10. During this trip, Plaintiff personally visited Defendant's hotel.  
28 Defendant's hotel has a passenger loading zone because pickup and dropoff occurs

1 there and it is located directly outside of the lobby entrance. There are also design  
 2 features showing an intent for utilization as a passenger loading zone. For example,  
 3 there is a *porte cochere*, which by definition is a design feature for passenger loading  
 4 zones.

5       11. While at Defendant's hotel, she discovered that Defendant's hotel has a  
 6 barrier to entry to the lobby, which is that the passenger loading zone does not have an  
 7 access aisle compliant with Section 503.3. The requirement of an access aisle at a  
 8 passenger loading zone relates to Plaintiff's disability of not having one leg and being  
 9 forced to use a wheelchair because access aisles are required so persons in a wheelchair  
 10 can maneuver without threat of danger from other vehicles and without other  
 11 encumbrances blocking their pathway. The lobby, therefore, is inaccessible to Plaintiff  
 12 by way of the passenger loading zone because there is no access aisle.

13       12. Plaintiff gained actual and personal knowledge of a barrier while visiting  
 14 Defendant's hotel (no access aisle at passenger loading zone), and as a result, she was  
 15 deterred from entering the hotel. She will only return to the hotel if Defendant puts the  
 16 required access aisle into place. Visiting otherwise would be futile because the lack of  
 17 the access aisle represents a barrier to entering the lobby.

18       13. An illustration of a correct access aisle is provided below:



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 27  
 28       14. Defendant's hotel passenger loading zone does not have the access aisle  
 depicted in the illustration above.

15. It is readily achievable to modify the hotel to provide an access aisle. Provision of an access aisle is extremely inexpensive; it involves painting and measuring tools.

16. Without injunctive relief, Plaintiff and others will continue to be unable to independently use Defendant's hotel in violation of her rights under the ADA.

## **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

17. Plaintiff incorporates all allegations heretofore set forth.

18. Defendant has discriminated against Plaintiff and others in that it has failed to make its public lodging services fully accessible to, and independently usable by, individuals who are disabled in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a) and § 121282(b)(2)(iv) and the 2010 Standards, as described above.

19. Defendant has discriminated against Plaintiff in that it has failed to remove architectural barriers to make its lodging services fully accessible to, and independently usable by individuals who are disabled in violation of 42 U.S.C. §12182(b)(A)(iv) and the 2010 Standards, as described above. Compliance with the 2010 Standards would neither fundamentally alter the nature of Defendant's lodging services nor result in an undue burden to Defendant.

20. In violation of the 2010 Standards, Defendant's hotel passenger loading zone does not have a disability access aisle compliant with Section 503.3 of the Standards.

21. Compliance with 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv) and the 2010 Standards, as described above, is readily achievable by the Defendant. *Id.* Readily achievable means that providing access is easily accomplishable without significant difficulty or expense.

22. Defendant's conduct is ongoing, and Plaintiff invokes her statutory right to declaratory and injunctive relief, as well as costs and attorneys' fees.

23. Without the requested injunctive relief, Defendant's non-compliance with the ADA's requirements that its passenger loading zone be fully accessible to, and independently useable by, disabled people is likely to recur.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. Declaratory Judgment that at the commencement of this action Defendant was in violation of the specific requirements of Title III of the ADA described above, and the relevant implementing regulations of the ADA;
  - b. Permanent injunction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(a)(2) and 28 CFR § 36.504(a) which directs Defendant to take all steps necessary to bring its passenger loading zone into full compliance with the requirements set forth in the ADA;
  - c. Payment of costs and attorney's fees;
  - d. Provision of whatever other relief the Court deems just, equitable and appropriate.

## **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

24. Plaintiff realleges all allegations heretofore set forth.

25. Defendant has violated the Unruh by denying Plaintiff equal access to its public accommodation on the basis of her disability as outlined above.

26. Unruh provides for declaratory and monetary relief to “aggrieved persons” who suffer from discrimination on the basis of their disability.

27. Plaintiff has been damaged by the Defendant's non-compliance with Unruh.

28. Pursuant to Cal Civ. Code §52, Plaintiff is further entitled to such other relief as the Court considers appropriate, including monetary damages in an amount of \$4,000.00, and not more.

29. Pursuant to Unruh, Plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees and costs in an amount to be proven at trial.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. Declaratory Judgment that at the commencement of this action Defendant was in violation of the specific requirements of Unruh; and

- b. Permanent injunction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(a)(2) and 28 CFR § 36.504(a) which directs Defendant to take all steps necessary to bring its passenger loading zone into full compliance with the requirements set forth in the ADA;
  - c. Payment of costs and attorney's fees;
  - d. Damages in the amount of \$4,000.00; and
  - e. Provision of whatever other relief the Court deems just, equitable and appropriate.

## **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff hereby demands a jury trial on issues triable by a jury.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 5<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022.

/s/ P. Kristofer Strojnik  
P. Kristofer Strojnik (242728)  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

## VERIFICATION

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

DATED this 5<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022.

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Theresa Marie Brooke